(a) total number of LPG bottling plants functioning in Gujarat at present;

(b) the capacity of each of these plants and whether they are achieving full bottling capacity; if not, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to increase the number of LPG bottling plants in Gujarat to make LPG refills availability easier in the State; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Six LPG bottling plants are operating in the State of Gujarat. The capacity and location of these plants is as under:

Location	Capacity (TMTPA)
Rajkot	44
Hazira	44
Koyali	102
Surat	12
Gandhinagar	26
Hariyala	34

The above bottling plants are achieving the full bottling capacity. However, the entire capacity of Koyali plant is being resited to Ahmedabad for 34 TMTPA and to Gandhar 68 TMTPA, due to which capacity of Koyali plant could not be achieved fully.

(c) New bottling plants are set up on the basis of techno-economic feasibility after taking into consideration the demand potential of packed LPG in the nearby consumption zones. Currently, the demand of the State of Gujarat is being met by and large in full. However, to meet the future demand of the State of Gujarat, the following new bottling plants are planned to be set up under the VIII Plan proposals :

Location	Capacity (TMTPA)
Ahmedabad	66*
Bhavnagar	44

* Includes capacity of 34 TMTPA proposed under part resitement of bottling capacity at Koyali.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Policy for Natural Gas Utilisation

3585. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the Government's policy regarding utilisation of natural gas in the country;

(b) whether Government have any proposal to make some changes in the existing policy; and

(c) if so, the details threof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The gas utilisation policy of the Government provides for the allocation of gas according to the imputed economic value of natural gas use subject to preference for the power and fertiliser sectors. The policy also provides for the extraction of higher value components such as C2/C3 and LPG from natural gas wherever feasible.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal at present for changes in the exisiting policy.

Fall in Production of Neelam Oil Field

3586. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of oil from Neelam Oil Field has gone down;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some foreign companies are of the view that this field can be revived; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to revive the Neelam Oil Field and by when results are expected?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Neelam Oil Field has shown declining trend in production since 1995-96 as given below:—

Year	Crude Oil Production (MMT)
1994-95	3.808
1995-96	3.528
1996-97	2.290

(c) and (d) ONGC has hired consultancy services for studying the behaviour of some non-performing wells of Neelam Field for suggesting remedial measures. Government has not taken any decision to enter into strategic alliances with Multinational Companies for the renewal of this field.

Deduction of Employees' E.P.F. Amount by O.N.G.C.

3587. SHRI SUDHIR RANJAN MAJUMDAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the O.N.G.C. is deducting E.P.F. amount from employees and has not yet implemented the employees pension scheme under Act No. 25 of 1996;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what action the ministry has taken so far and which authority has given relaxation to the O.N.G.C. in this regard;

(d) whether Government would take any action against the O.N.G.C. for the violation of Act No. 25 of 1996; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) O.N.G.C. Ltd. has applied to E.P.F. authorities for exemption from the purview of the Employees pension Scheme, 1995, under clause 39 of the

3588. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG connections in Andhra Pradesh as on 31st December 1996, district-wise;

(b) the number of applications pending in the State, district wise.

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision to sanction eight lakh new LPG connections in the country; and

(d) if so, the number of gas connections proposed to be allocated, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The LPG customer population enrolled with the distributors of Public Sector Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 1.1.1997 was about 20.49 lakhs.

(b) The number of persons in the waiting list registered with the LPG distributors of the Public Sector Oil Companies in the State of Andhra Pradesh as on 1.1.1997 was about 10.74 lakhs.

(c) Government had approved release of 20 lakh new LPG connections during 1996-97, out of this, release of 8.5 lakh new LPG connections were approved for the period January 1997 to March 1997.

(d) New LPG connections are released in a phased manner throughout the country, depending upon the availability of LPG, new customer enrolment plan, waiting list, slack available with the distributors of the area and their viability. LPG is not an allocated product and no advance allocation is made.

Import of Kerosene and LPG

3589. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to allow import of kerosene and LPG in the country during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto?